

Help us to get 1,000 veterans

The veteran community has the opportunity to bring V.A. health care to Bennington. However, like all federal agencies, the bottom line is numbers and our goal is 1,000 registered veterans, but we feel we can accomplish this goal with your help.

Listed below are the locations, dates, and times for registering for local V.A. Health Care. If you live in Bennington County, Windham County or the border towns in Massachusetts or New York you would be able to access services locally. We need veterans that are currently utilizing V.A. Health Care as well as folks that would like to. Many veterans are unaware of their eligibility and to assist with that process each site will have a team of V.A. staff, Service Officers from the Legion, VF and VVA to assist you. Please do not try to determine your own eligibility, let us help. This registration process is critical to your success!

Manchester VFW, March 25, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Arlington American Legion, March 25, 3-7 p.m.; Bennington American Legion, March 26, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Wilmington Fire House, April 1, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Pownal American Legion, April 1, 3-7 p.m.; Bennington American Legion, April 2, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Please mark your calendar for the date closest to you.

JOHN J. MINER, Chairman
Veterans Health Care Committee

Bennington 3/4/97

Remembering Those Who Served in War

By CHRISTINE CUPAIUOLO

Herald Staff

11.11.91

For the past six years, John Bergeron has worn a simple bracelet on his wrist that symbolizes a complicated time.

Etched in silver is the name of Carroll J. Deuso, a member of the U.S. Navy who was shot down over a body of water in Vietnam. Deuso was on his way to the Philippines to spend Christmas with his family when his plane was attacked.

His body was never recovered, but Bergeron, president of the Rutland chapter of Vietnam Vet-

erans of America, makes sure that Dueso's story is not forgotten.

"I knew his family. I didn't know who he was, or that he was missing or that he was even in Vietnam until six years ago, but when I saw the bracelet I knew he was from my hometown," Bergeron said. He was referring to Richford, Vt., the town in which both he and Deuso grew up, and then left for Vietnam.

Bergeron, who owns a shoe repair shop on Center Street in Rutland called Downtown Has Sole, said he recently persuaded the Chittenden Bank at the corner of Center Street and Merchants Row to dis-

play an exhibit of photos of Rutland County residents who were killed in Vietnam.

Those photos, along with a collage of current VVA Rutland chapter members, will be on display for one month, he said, in honor of Veterans Day.

Although the date itself marks the anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I in 1918, Veterans Day is more commonly known as a day of remembrance and tribute to all who served in war.

State and federal government offices are closed,

(See Page 13: Veterans)

Veterans

Continued from Page 11

as are most schools and banks.

But where there were once Veterans Day parades, today there are prayer meetings and small ceremonies. Few towns still sponsor large gatherings, and even New York City's Veterans Day Parade has seen its number of participants dwindle in recent years.

For many, the day is little more than a holiday from work — a day to forget about things, not remember.

Paul Terenzini, first vice commander for American Legion Post 31 in Rutland, said the Legion stopped organizing a Veterans Day parade in Rutland seven years ago because of a lack of participants.

Terenzini said that although the post represents 1,500 area veterans, some now live elsewhere and poor weather often keeps many at home.

"We have some who want to start it again, but we know it would be pretty hard. We don't have enough people who will participate," he said.

On Tuesday, Post 31 will hold a public ceremony at the American Legion on Washington Street at 11 a.m. Mayor Jeffrey N. Wennberg is scheduled to give the opening remarks

and music will be provided by the Rutland High School band.

The guest speaker is Richard DeCoteau, a Veterans Administration Hospital coordinator in White River who is in charge of transportation for disabled veterans.

Other regional events open to the public include:

- ♦ Brandon — American Legion Post 55 will hold a memorial service at the veterans memorial on the village green at 11 a.m.

- ♦ Castleton — Legion Post 50 will hold a memorial service at the veterans memorial on Main Street at 11 a.m.

- ♦ Wallingford — The Mill River Union High School band will perform a special selection of songs for veterans at Wallingford Elementary School on School Street at 10 a.m.

One local business has scheduled two ceremonies for its employees.

Tom McCarthy, General Electric's manager of employee and community relations, said that at the suggestion of employees, the company will honor prisoners of war and those considered missing in action.

POW/MIA flags donated by GE em-

ployee Joseph Donaldson will be officially presented to both of GE's plants.

The GE plant on Columbian Avenue has scheduled its ceremony for 11 a.m.; its sister plant on Windcrest Road will hold a ceremony at 12 p.m.

Both will include a reading of the poem "The Unknown Soldier."

"Observing the day is very important to our employees. We're very mindful of the sacrifices veterans have made," McCarthy said.

He also noted that GE's Rutland Employee Community Concerns Fund decided to donate \$1,000 to the Dodge Development Center in Rutland, an organization that provides counseling services and liaison assistance to veterans.

Donaldson is the organizer of the Northeast POW/MIA Network. Each Thursday, members of the group hold a 24-minute silent vigil in Memorial Park in Fair Haven to remember those who are either missing in action or who are still being held against their will.

The number of minutes, said Donaldson, symbolizes the number of years that have passed since the American government declared that all POW's have returned home.

Rutland Region

Rutland Daily Herald ♦ Monday, June 9, 1997 ♦ Page 13

Born to Be Wild



Staff Photo by L.B.

Two-year-old Justin Hilder of Fair Haven needs both hands to grip the handlebar of his grandfather's Harley Davidson motorcycle at a jamboree held Sunday at Kick's Tavern in Mendon to raise funds for a veterans park. (Photo, Page 15)

Good Fun for a Good Cause at Kick's This Sunday Five Top Groups to Perform

Seventeen years ago a group of Vermonters, upset with the stereotype of the Vietnam Veteran, organized and became the first chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). This weekend they're holding a benefit concert to raise funds to complete a memorial to be located in the Main Street Park in Rutland.

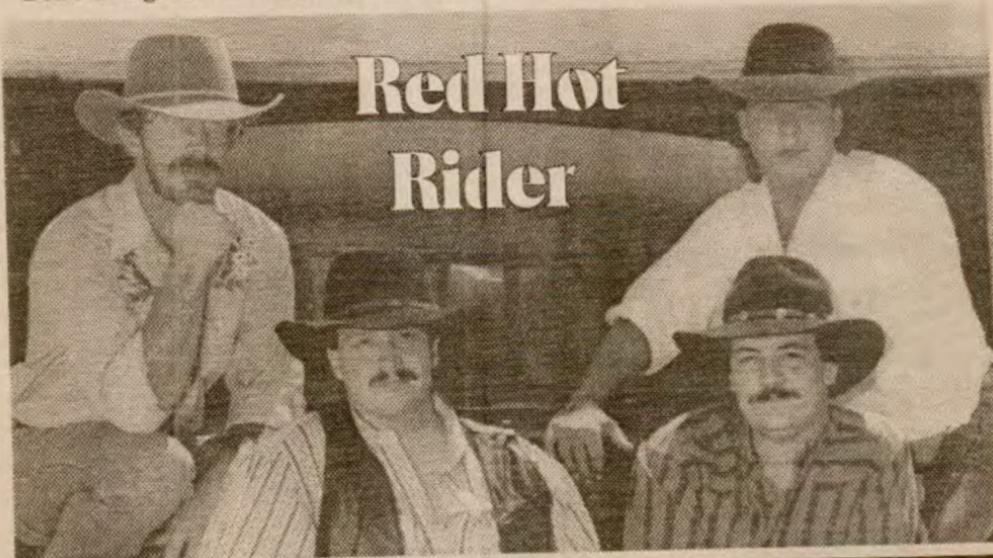
The concert is this Sunday, June 8th, at Kick's Tavern in Mendon!

Doors open at noon and bands will begin at 1pm. There will be five bands playing, hosted by Blue Train Band. Other participating groups include Swift Kick, Red Hot Rider, Jim Duvall and North Country connection.

During the concert the Vets will be holding raffles, 50/50 drawings and selling rip off tickets. Kick's will serve food. There will be fun activities for the kids, including clowns, jugglers, magicians, face painting, games, ice cream, cotton candy and popcorn.

Concert tickets are \$5 for adults. Children under 12 are free.

Don't miss good fun for a good cause at Kick's this Sunday!



Hard to Hear Unspeakable Truths

I was perplexed by "Vietnam Myths and Phony Vets" (Sept. 3), Dennis Jensen's commentary about sociologist Jerry Lembeke, who claims that Vietnam veterans were not spat upon when they returned home from the war. Mr. Lembeke's book, "The Spitting Image," suggests that stories of spitting were planted by Nixon politicos wanting to drive a wedge between returning vets and anti-war protestors. To back up his theory, Mr. Lembeke cites the lack of photographic evidence of spitters.

Mr. Lembeke has created quite an uproar — especially among veterans who clearly remember being spat upon. A few weeks back, USA Today ran a story about Mr. Lembeke's book. A week later that paper published a brief note from me in which I said that in my two years of conversations with Vietnam veterans (researching "Unspeakable Truths and Happy Endings: Human Cruelty and the New Trauma Therapy," published this year by Sidran) I heard many stories of hitting, spitting, beating and punching. Most veterans I interviewed also told of keeping their medals hidden in closets and refusing to march in patriotic parades to this day, afraid of what bystanders might do. After my note was published, many, many, many veterans contacted me to say, "thanks." Not one of the veterans contacting me suggested that I was in error and that Jerry Lembeke was in the clear.

One veteran who contacted me had already called Jerry Lembeke and told him about his own experience "returning from Nam in June of 1965 and being jeered and booed by a band of anti-war demonstrators at Travis Air Force Base." According to this vet, Lembeke "questioned whether such an incident could have actually taken place. He cited some factors he had learned from his research, pointed out that my narrative did not concur with what he understood from his research, and concluded that while I had my own personal recollection, there was no documented evidence of any such incidents ... therefore, the incident I related couldn't have happened."

Apparently it was a calm, rather arrogant denial of vividly held memory, and the veteran took it in stride — possibly because he'd been disbelieved so many times before. In my two years of talking to veterans and other survivors of catastrophic experiences, I learned from many that they meet with this sort of denial all of the time. Fear, revulsion, or even a simple failure of the imagination on the part of the listener, renders survivors' truths unbelievable and, eventually, unspeakable.

Our failures as listeners may not be ill intentioned, but their effects are certainly not benign. Survivors of war, Holocaust, street crime, family violence, sexual assault, and political terror told me repeatedly of the sorrow they felt when they braved articulating the horrors they had suffered and friends and family could not listen and believe. Richard Bikales, a survivor of Nazi death camps told me, "Even now it's very hard. Even if they listen, they don't understand. The words aren't there that really describe what's inside me. How do you describe the feelings? How do you describe the events? How do you describe the horror? I don't know."

So while I am astounded by Jerry Lembeke's slick refusal to take vivid, well-articulated personal tes-

timony as evidence of truth, I do give him the benefit of the doubt. He is probably not extraordinarily thick-headed. I'm inclined to think he's just a regular guy with regular limitations. Many of us have difficulty managing our emotions and integrity when the stories we hear run directly counter to the stories we wish we were hearing.

REBECCA COFFEY
Brattleboro

9.12.88

Young Vo-Tech Engineers Aid in War Memorial Design

There were no losers in Laurie Wilson's computer aided drafting classes at Stafford Vocational Technical this semester. The 18 students learned a good deal about the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, the history of that era, and the selection process and design of the Vietnam War Memorial.

They also learned about community involvement as

they helped local veterans in the design of a planned Vietnam War memorial that will be located in the south section of Main Street Park.

And they all received Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter #1, Rutland, when the local veterans group selected a final entry from the work of the students.

Of course, as explained by Ms. Wilson, the students

also learned much about using CAD, computer aided drafting, or CADD, computer aided design and drafting equipment.

All 18 were students in the Engineering Technology Academy at Stafford, which also includes classes on principals of technology and mathematics and manufacturing technology during the school year.

The work with the veterans and local designers took place this spring with Wilson handing out packets of information from the faculty and the veterans that set parameters for the project.

"This was a learning experience for all, we didn't view it as a competition," said Wilson Monday. "We critiqued all designs, picked representatives to submit designs to the veterans group and worked to amend the final design to fit the planned site."

John Bergeron, president of VVA #1, was the coordinator of the effort for the veterans. He also was the one who handed out the special T-shirts to students last Friday. Students also received certificates of appreciation for their community effort to assist the veterans.

Local designer Bob Parker, associated with NBS Architects, Rutland, also drew praise for his efforts with the veterans and the students. Parker remains involved in the project.

The final design was put

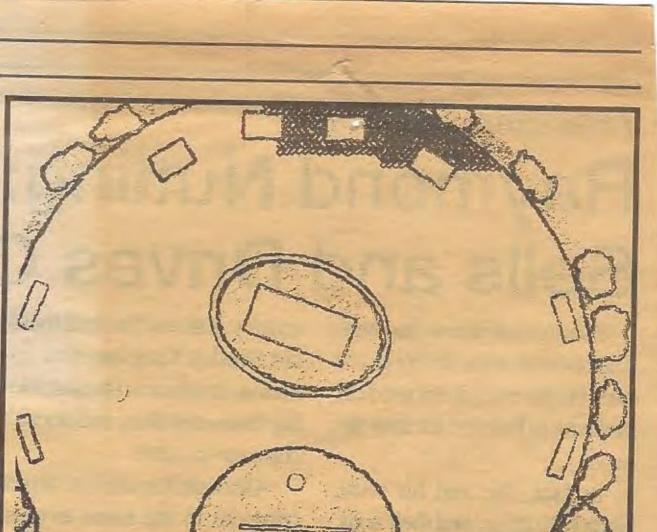
together from the submission of Mike Handley of Poultney High School, one of eight area schools that utilize the education programs at Stafford Vo-Tech Center.

Other students involved in the effort, and their sending schools, were:

Ryan Biddiscombe, Ted Carlson, Shawn Jurgen, Bob Hesse, Len Clark, and Jay Kelley, all of Rutland High School, and Chris Ferraro and Mike Nadler, both of Mount St. Joseph Academy.

Also, Dan Harmon, Forrest Baker, and David Manning, all of Poultney High School, Nick Flanders, Tim Galarneau, and Rob Aines, all of Mill River Union High School, Christine Poro of Proctor High School,

And, Jack Waitkus of Fair Haven Union High School, and Zach Provin of Otter Valley Union High School.



Final Design

A planned Vietnam War memorial to be located in the south section of Main Street Park, across from Christ the King School, will follow this layout selected from design work by students at Stafford Vo-Tech School.



THE RUTLAND TRIBUNE
THURS MARCH 10, 1997

Vietnam Veterans seek donations for memorial

Vietnam Veterans of America was founded in Rutland, Vermont in 1980 and has grown to a 756 chapter organization nationwide, and has dedicated itself to assist Vietnam Veterans in their efforts to live full and productive lives.

Several weeks ago, the City of Rutland authorized VVA Chapter One to erect a memorial to honor all Vietnam War veterans from Rutland County. We would like all Vietnam veterans whose home of record was Rutland County, to please send us a copy of their Military Record (DD214) so that we can inscribe their name on our memorial. Deceased veterans, whether killed in action or have died since the end of the Vietnam War, will have their names placed on the memorial, so it is important for the families and friends of these people to contact us at Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Chapter One, P.O. Box 6301, Rutland, Vermont 05702.

We have been busy for the past year developing the design for our project. People have donated materials, expertise and some monies thus far. However, we are still a long way off from reaching our goal of 30,000 dollars to complete the memorial. We need people with fund-raising expertise to assist us in our efforts to raise cash. Donations of any size will also be greatly appreciated. While we are currently awaiting grants, it will be the raffles, dances and small donations that will help us the most. Thank You.

11/15/97

financing the program.

Brueley Contractors
will provide
excavation/backfill
and concrete
foundations.
If you already
have please advise
BBF

Vietnam Veterans Work on Memorial

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However, the organization is still a long way from reaching the goal of \$30,000 to complete the memorial. People with fund-raising expertise are needed to assist in the effort to raise cash. Donations of any size also would be greatly appreciated.

Moving Wall Visits Rutland For Vietnam Veterans Day

By SANDI SWITZER
Herald Correspondent

Two panels of the Vietnam Veterans' "Moving Wall" will be escorted out of town by a POW-MIA motorcycle club after a one-day stop in Rutland.

The wall will begin its official visit to Vermont on Saturday at the Second Annual Vietnam Era Recognition Day at the State Fairgrounds in Rutland.

The wall is a traveling version of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and lists the names of American men and women killed in Vietnam while serving their country.

The two panels will be on display from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Vermont and Quebec color guards will conduct a wreath-laying ceremony in front of the memorial.

A truck carrying the wall will leave Rutland, escorted by the POW-MIA Motorcycle Club from Massachusetts. The group will travel to Enosburg Falls, where the entire wall will be displayed for one week.

Co-chairs of the Vietnam Era Recog-

8/8/97

(See Page 19: Veterans)

RUTLAND HERALD

Veterans

Continued from Page 17

nition Day are Tom and Carol Reardon of Whitehall, N.Y.

"The purpose of the annual event is to pay homage to our departed comrades and get together with vets from across the state," he said.

Hosts for the day include members of Chapter 1 of the Vietnam Veterans of America, the first chapter of its kind formed in the country.

The organization was founded in 1978 and is the only veterans' group devoted exclusively to improving the lives of those who served in uniform during the Vietnam War.

Reardon was one of the founding members of the organization.

"We wanted to help each other in the healing process and provide comradeship," he said. "We also wanted to help each other get back on our feet after the war."

Reardon served three 18-month tours of duty in Vietnam. He was awarded a Purple Heart for wounds he received when traveling in a convoy from the Pleiku Air Force Base in

the central highlands to a supply depot 100 miles away in QuiNhon.

"We were ambushed by the Vietcong in one of the most treacherous mountain passages in the world," he said. "They destroyed 30 of the 39 trucks in the convoy, killed seven of our men and wounded 14 others."

The date was Sept. 2, 1967, two months shy of Reardon's final tour of duty.

Since that time Reardon has devoted his efforts to improving the quality of life for all veterans.

And with organizations like Chapter 1 and annual events honoring Vietnam veterans, Reardon hopes "the public will learn we're finally healing our physical and emotional wounds."

Some of the day's events will have a somber tone, but many activities will provide fun for the whole family.

For instance, the country music band Blue Train will entertain the crowd.

And local musicians brave enough

to step in front of a microphone can perform at an open stage.

Helicopters and military equipment will be on display throughout the day. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine recruiters will be available to discuss career opportunities.

Also featured at the event are craft and military vendors, plus displays by the local sheriff's department, fire department and ambulance service.

Admission to Saturday's event, which runs from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., is free and activities will take place rain or shine. Organizers encourage everyone to attend and to use the Dana Avenue entrance.

The following is a list of scheduled events:

- ◆ Gates open, 10 a.m.
- ◆ Moving Wall display, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- ◆ Wreath-laying ceremony, 11 a.m.
- ◆ Guest speakers, 11:15 a.m.
- ◆ Open stage, noon to 2 p.m.
- ◆ Moving Wall departs, 1 p.m.
- ◆ Blue Train Band, 2 p.m.

Coming Home

Vietnam Veterans Remembered At Moving Wall In Rutland

By ALAN J. KEAYS

Staff Writer

Ron Hall of Shrewsbury remembers walking around the Vermont State Fair in Rutland with his younger brother when they were kids.

"He looked forward to coming here each year," Hall said of his brother, Gary Hall.

On Saturday, they were together again at the state fairgrounds, as Ron Hall placed a wreath at the foot of the Vietnam Veterans "Moving Wall" near a panel bearing his brother's name.

"He used to play here," Ron Hall said. "It's nice that he was able to come back."

Four panels of the wall were on display Saturday at the fairgrounds as part of the Second Annual Vietnam Era Recognition Day.

The traveling version of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., the "Moving Wall" made a three-hour stop at the fairgrounds as it headed for a week-long stay in Enosburg Falls.

Joining Hall in the wreath-laying ceremony were color guards from Vermont and Quebec as well as other relatives of Vermonters who were killed during the Vietnam War.

Those included the families of Gerald Calvin of Bennington, Allen Archer of Fair Haven, Fred Frappiea of Saxtons River, and Clifton Bacon of Manchester.

Ron Hall, 50, served in Vietnam as a member of the Army. His

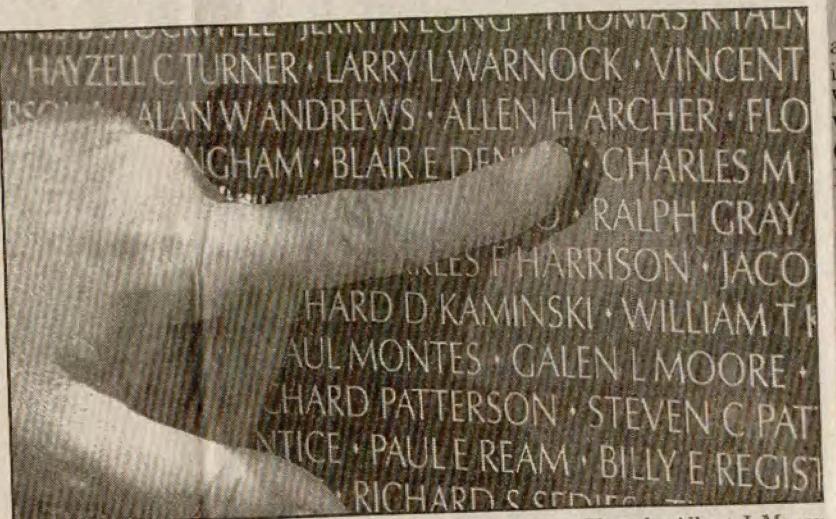


Photo by Albert J. Marro

Elizabeth Archer Moulton points to the name of her brother, Allen Archer, on the "Moving Wall" memorial in Rutland Saturday. Archer was killed in Vietnam 30 years ago.

brother, two years younger, was a Marine.

"He was always looking to do me one better," Ron Hall said. "If I jumped over one bicycle, he jumped two."

Looking at his brother's name on the wall as tears welled in his eyes, Ron Hall added, "As far as I'm concerned he's more than one up on me."

Archer's sister, Elizabeth Archer-Moulton of Castleton, placed a small monument made by a New Hampshire man who was a boyhood friend of her brother. The statue, which included a photograph of

Archer wearing a green beret, commemorated the 30th anniversary of Archer's 1967 death.

Also attending as a member of the Vermont Color Guard was Charlene Moffit of Shaftsbury. Wearing a military dress white shirt, black pants and white gloves, Moffit held a bright yellow flag embroidered with red stars for each of the 17 people from Bennington County killed in Vietnam.

One of those stars represented Moffit's brother, Clifton Bacon.

"I do this as a tribute to him and all veterans," Moffit said of her color guard participation.

Approximately 200 people attended the event. Speakers included Rutland City Mayor Jeffrey Wennberg, Deputy Adjutant General William Noyce and Vermont State Council of Vietnam Veterans President John Miner.

Miner said recognition of the deeds of the veterans comes not only through words but actions. Veterans, he said, must continue to push the federal government for necessary health care benefits.

Also, on the state level, Miner asked for support of a proposal calling for all state office buildings that fly flags to include the "POW/MIA" flag.

"We must keep working together as veterans so others don't forget," he said.

Following the service, the truck carrying the "Moving Wall" drove out of the fairgrounds onto Route 7 escorted by the POW/MIA Motorcycle Club of Massachusetts.

In addition to the wreath-laying ceremony, there were several other events scattered throughout the day at the fairgrounds. The country music band Blue Train performed in the afternoon.

Along with displays of military equipment, recruiters from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines were also available.

"Hopefully this event will continue to grow each year we have it," said John Bergeron, president of the Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1 of Rutland.



Photo by Albert J. Marro
Buster Holmberg, president of Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 743 in Chester, was one of many veterans who attended Saturday's event recognizing Vietnam-era veterans. The event was held at the Vermont Fairgrounds in Rutland.

Vietnam Veteran's Memorial - Almost a Reality

Major Fundraiser Scheduled for June 8th at Kick's

by Greg Saylor

Seventeen years ago a group of Vermonters upset with the stereotype of the Vietnam Veteran, their treatment by the public, the government, and other veterans groups, organized and became the first chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA). Chartered in April 1980, as the founding chapter, the organization now boasts 756 chapters nationwide. Its mission is to assist all Vietnam Veterans to successfully live their lives to its fullest potential. This was especially true after enduring military service in a conflict that had become exceedingly unpopular with the American public. The local chapter, known as VVA 1, has had its ups and downs throughout the years. It is currently on the upswing with about 120 members, a newsletter, monthly meetings, and some money in the bank. Throughout the years, however, the group has always been there to help any Vietnam vet in need, fulfilling the VVA's philosophy in action: "Veterans helping veterans."

John Bergeron of Rutland is one of a new group of Vietnam veterans involved in VVA 1. Originally uninterested in the organization, he was finally drawn to it when he saw the "Moving Wall," a replica of the Vietnam Memorial that was on display in Rutland in 1991. Founding members such as Don Bodette, Mary and Albert Trombley, all of Clarendon and Roy "Jake" Jacobsen of West Rutland have taken a less active role in recent years.

Many years after the founding of VVA in Rutland, it was decided by Chapter members to establish a memorial for local Vietnam vets. In 1981 a Vietnam veteran named John Reno began sculpting a block of marble donated by The Vermont Marble Company. Suffering from what psychiatrists call "Post-Vietnam Stress Disorder," Reno felt that completing the sculpture would be a personal catharsis and a way to recognize Vietnam veterans who at that time had received no honor for serving their country. It was also a way for him to repay the VVA for their help. "I'm alive because of the VVA," Reno has been quoted as saying. However, in 1982 Reno died in a boating accident on the Hudson River and the project was put aside. Later fellow veterans looked for the marble slab but could not find it. In 1995, current VVA 1 President, John Bergeron, joined the search and ultimately found the slab stored in an overgrown quarry not far from Reno's former home. Bergeron subsequently formed a committee to complete the task. The marble slab is now at the studio of West Rutland sculptor Don Ramey, also a Vietnam veteran.

The project will be called the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial and will be located in Main St. Park, on the west side of Main St., south of Washington St. Bergeron describes the memorial as being "approximately 700 sq. ft. and will consist of a landscaped, oblong, brick terrace flanked on four corners with benches and plantings. This will provide a perfect garden setting for reflection and meditation. Within the area will be the marble block with a bas relief sculpture of a soldier. In the center of the park is planned a bronze fountain in the shape of a "field cross" - a configuration of a bayonet, boots, and a helmet used to commemorate a fallen soldier. The area will be a fitting tribute to area residents who served in the Vietnam War."

The VVA wants the memorial to include the names of those whose home of record was Rutland County at the time of entry into the military and who served in Vietnam. If you or someone you know fits this category, please send a copy of the military record (DD214) to the organization so the names can be inscribed on the memorial. Veterans from Rutland County killed in Vietnam will have their names placed on the memorial. Please contact VVA Chapter 1 at P.O. Box 6301, Rutland, Vt. 05702 or call 802-773-2815.

With an estimated total cost of \$20,000, the members of VVA 1 have been struggling to raise the necessary funds to complete the project through grants, dances, raffles, donations, and a jamboree. Mr. Bergeron says there have been two recent phases of fund-raising efforts. "In the past few months we have contacted all the service organizations in the area such as the Lion's Club and Rotary for donations. Phase two consists of fund-raisers that we hope will put us over the top. The major fund-raiser will be a jamboree held at Kick's on Rte. 4 in Mendon. Doug Williams, owner of Kick's and a Vietnam veteran himself, has donated the use of his facilities for the day. This is a prime example of the dedication and commitment of the veterans to the success of the project."

Scheduled for Sunday, June 8, the doors will open at noon and bands will begin at 1 PM. There will be five bands playing that day hosted by the Blue Train Band. The other bands participating will be Swift Kick, Red Hot Rider, Jim Duvall, and North Country Connection. While the bands play, the veterans will be holding raffles, 50/50 drawings, and selling rip off tickets. Bergeron feels they have some terrific raffle items and door prizes. "Raffle items will include ski passes, cords of fire wood, fuel oil, gift certificates for restaurants in the area, weekend stays at the Cortina Inn, Howard Johnson's, and the Comfort Inn, and many door prizes." Food will be available as usual in the restaurant at Kick's.

In an attempt to make the occasion a family affair, there will be plenty of fun activities outside for the kids, including clowns, jugglers, magicians, face painting, games, ice cream, cotton candy, and popcorn. The cost is \$5.00 per person at the door; children under 12 are free. The day should be fun for the whole family and the Vietnam Veterans of VVA 1 look forward to a great day with a huge turn out. Let's help



Renovations continue at the VVA's Dodge Development Center in Rutland

Bob Perry photo

support this most important and worthwhile local project. John Bergeron sums it up well stating, "The local Vietnam Vets are overjoyed with the prospect of having their own memorial. It will provide a place to sit and meditate. They will have a place to reflect and think about buddies who never came home; a place to heal their own wounds."

Another important veterans project in the Rutland area is the Dodge Development Center, known as Dodge House. Although VVA 1 has been extensively involved in the project, it is actually directed by a spin-off organization, the Veterans Assistance Office. This organization exists to help all veterans, not just Vietnam veterans.

Dodge Developmental Center will be for homeless veterans, male or female, on a long term basis. The veteran must be fully committed to any personal rehabilitation, job counseling, or medical help necessary to get back on track. John Bergeron says, "The center received its name from Michael Dodge, a local Vietnam Veteran who had a dream of having a center of this type here in Rutland. He spent a great deal of time helping other Vets in the Rutland area with their problems. He committed suicide and so will never see the results of his efforts and his dreams. Others felt it would be appropriate to name the center after him."

The house, located on Crescent St. next to Kehoe's Market, is a former abandoned HUD house. It is now being fully refurbished and when finished should hold about 14 individuals with a special area set aside for a family, if needed. Still in the construction phase, the veterans feel that it should be completed in 30 to 60 days. It will also house the Veterans Assistance Office. Many veterans, associates, friends, and companies have donated time and material to the center. Corning Fiberglass, for example, has donated all the insulation for the center and veterans pitched in to install it throughout the house. Once again this shows the dedication and commitment of the local veterans to help and support their fellow veterans in need.

Those interested in membership in the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter One (VVA 1) are encouraged to join. Membership is open to any Vietnam era veteran for annual dues of only \$20.00. There is also an associate membership open to any non-Vietnam veteran. The organization normally meets at 6pm on the first Saturday of each month at Seward's on North Main St. in Rutland.

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Up Against 'The Wall'

One-Act Tells How Family Is Touched by Casualty

By PATRICK RAYMOND

Greg Turner approached the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Wearing tan slacks held up by suspenders, his hair gray, he examined the black granite wall, searching for a name.

"There it is," he said in a thick Southern accent. He began to read the name, but quickly was interrupted.

"Stop," shouted Heather Brower. "Wait for the music. Try it again."

Turner, a Rutland High School junior, sighed and stepped off stage, awaiting his cue from director and fellow student Brower to begin his monologue again.

Turner plays the father of a Vietnam War casualty in his school's production of Jan Stuckey's one-act play, "The Wall: A Pilgrimage."

"The Wall" tells the story of a family touched by one of the 58,132 American casualties marked by the memorial in Washington, D.C.

Brower, a senior, is directing the show with

help from theater teacher Cathy Archer. She chose the play after reading it for an advanced theater class.

"I really liked the concept," Brower said. "It addresses this particular event, but it's not exclusive. It doesn't preach."

For Brower, the play is personal. Her father served as a medic in Vietnam; his cousin's name is on the wall.

The show, part of the school's Year-End Studies program, gives six students a chance to flex their acting muscles, and offers nearly a dozen others the opportunity to explore backstage tasks such as costumes, lights and publicity.

The cast and crew have worked long hours since practices began May 20 to bring the production together.

Students researched two different eras: 1968, when the script's soldier was killed, and 1988,

(See Page 17: Wall)



Staff Photo by Vyto Starinskas

Rutland High students (from left) Greg Turner, Elizabeth Binder, Sarah Patrick, Angela Mainolfi, Chris Poirier and Robby Wetzler rehearse the one-act play "The Wall: A Pilgrimage" for presentation Thursday and Friday.

Continued from Page 15

when his family makes its pilgrimage to Washington.

The production's six actors all have theater experience, but for many, these are their first major roles. Junior Elizabeth Binder, who portrays the mother, has been on stage in the past as an extra.

"This is my first role with words," she said.

One challenge for the actors is the play's namesake. The story revolves around each character's conversations with a dead soldier, but the wall they speak to doesn't actually exist on stage.

"It was kind of intimidating at first," said junior Angela Mainolfi, who plays the soldier's widow, "but after a while

you get into character."

Binder added, "We all have kind of found the wall."

Many of the actors have a new respect for the memorial because of the play.

"I've never been," Mainolfi said, "but now I would really like to."

Freshman Chris Poirier portrays the fallen soldier's brother. Poirier's father was in the war.

The young actor drew inspiration from his father's writings from the time.

"It gave me a view into the war from the eyes of someone that was actually there," he said.

Poirier has visited the memorial

twice. He hopes to return within the next few months.

"I will have a totally different perspective," he said.

All involved hope the play's audience will, too.

"I think that a lot of people who lived through the war would like to see it and people that didn't can learn something from it," Turner said.

"*The Wall: A Pilgrimage*" will be presented Thursday at 8 p.m. and Friday at 7 p.m. at Rutland High School. Tickets are \$2 for veterans of any war, \$3 for students and senior citizens and \$5 for adults. For reservations, call the box office at 770-1409 between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Local Vet thankful for new V.A. clinic

BENNINGTON - The man who fought a year to get funding for a local clinic for veterans says he couldn't have done it alone.

"Veterans came out and proved what I was saying all along - that there was a need here," said John Miner, of Vietnam Veterans of American and president of the Vermont council. "I'm so proud we can do something like this for veterans."

On Friday, U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and senior member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, announced that funding for the proposed outpatient clinic for veterans at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington had been added to the Department of Veterans Affairs budget. Leahy said the clinic should open this year - possibly this summer.

Miner had argued that veterans in the Bennington area needed a local outpatient clinic. Currently, veterans must travel to the Veterans Administration hospital in White River Junction, almost two hours away.

Miner said he and other veterans started working in late 1996 for the clinic. At a meeting about the idea in White River Junction early last year, about 25 veterans showed up to lobby for the clinic, surprising state officials.

"It was a real grassroots effort. Veterans had to prove there was a need," Miner said.

He thanked the veterans, veterans' organizations, and fraternal groups that joined in the grassroots effort.

The proposed funding still must be approved by the U.S. House and Senate, but Leahy predicted this part of the bill would have no problem.

BENJAMIN BANWAR

2/10/98

Help us to get 1,000 veterans

The veteran community has the opportunity to bring V.A. health care to Bennington. However, like all federal agencies, the bottom line is numbers and our goal is 1,000 registered veterans, but we feel we can accomplish this goal with your help.

Listed below are the locations, dates, and times for registering for local V.A. Health Care. If you live in Bennington County, Windham County or the border towns in Massachusetts or New York you would be able to access services locally. We need veterans that are currently utilizing V.A. Health Care as well as folks that would like to. Many veterans are unaware of their eligibility and to assist with that process each site will have a team of V.A. staff, Service Officers from the Legion, VF and VVA to assist you. Please do not try to determine your own eligibility, let us help. This registration process is critical to your success!

Manchester VFW, March 25, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Arlington American Legion, March 25, 3-7 p.m.; Bennington American Legion, March 26, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Wilmington Fire House, April 1, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; Pownal American Legion, April 1, 3-7 p.m.; Bennington American Legion, April 2, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Please mark your calendar for the date closest to you.

JOHN J. MINER, Chairman
Veterans Health Care Committee

Bennington Banner
3/4/97

Great Help For Veterans

On behalf of the directors of the Veterans Assistance Office I would like to thank the members of the Rutland Kiwanis Club. Recently Kiwanis volunteers installed insulation at the Dodge Development Center on Crescent Street in Rutland. This was the second time the Kiwanis members contributed their time on this project.

When completed, the Dodge Development Center will aid homeless veterans in their transition back into the society which they served. In this age of declining government support, organizations like the Kiwanis become even more important for their generosity, concern and commitment to community. Additional and special appreciation to Ken Hibbard for his help. Thanks again.

PAUL ALBRO
Hubbardton

RUTLAND HERALD
4-7-97



Vietnam veteran Tom Reardon, left, helps set up panels from the "Moving Wall" at the Rutland Fairgrounds last weekend. The replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was displayed during the annual Vietnam Era Veterans Recognition Day. Reardon, formerly of Rutland, is associated with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and now resides in New York.

(Photo by Crossman)